

## GENERAL INFORMATION

Applicant:	South Loop Investments, LLC (owner/applicant)
Location:	8100 and 8150 26th Avenue South and 2500 East 82nd Street
Request:	Master Sign Plan for the Alpha B planned development
Existing Land Use and Zoning:	Hotel / vacant land; zoned LINDAU MIXED USE (LX)
Surrounding Land Use and Zoning:	East—Offices; zoned CO-1(AR-17) North—Hotel; zoned LX(PD)(AR-17) South—Surface parking lot; zoned CO-2(PD)(AR-17) West—Mall of America; zoned CX-2(PD)(AR-17)
Comprehensive Plan Designation:	Lindau Mixed Use

## HISTORY

City Council Action:	12/16/13 – Approved rezoning from CO-1(AR-17), Commercial Office (Airport Runway) to LX(AR-17), Lindau Mixed Use (Airport Runway).
City Council Action:	12/16/13 – Approved a platting variance to defer park dedication for the plat of LINDAU LINK ADDITION and the preliminary and final plat of LINDAU LINK ADDITION.
City Council Action:	05/04/15 – Approved rezoning 8100 26th Avenue from LX(AR-17), Lindau Mixed Use(Airport Runway) to LX(AR- 17)(PD), Lindau Mixed Use(Airport Runway)(Planned Development), a Preliminary Development Plan for Alpha B, which includes a hotel, restaurant, retail building and parking structure, and a Final Development Plan for a 5-story, 148 room hotel and a 326 space, four level parking structure.

## CHRONOLOGY

Planning Commission	06/16/16	Public hearing scheduled
City Council	06/27/16	Tentative meeting date

## **DEADLINE FOR AGENCY ACTION**

Application Date:	05/18/16
60 Days:	07/17/16
Extension Letter Mailed:	No
120 Days:	09/15/16
<b>Applicable Deadline:</b>	<b>07/17/16</b>
Newspaper Notification:	Confirmed – (06/02/16 Sun Current – 10 day notice)
Direct Mail Notification	Confirmed – (500 buffer – 10 day notice)

## **STAFF CONTACT**

Mike Centinario  
(952) 563-8921  
mcentinario@BloomingtonMN.gov

## **PROPOSAL**

The applicant is seeking Master Sign Plan approval for Alpha B development Phases 1 and 2 proposed signage. The Master Sign Plan incorporates the comprehensive on-building and freestanding sign package for the AC Marriott Hotel and parking structure, Phase 1, and a restaurant and retail building, Phase 2. Phase 3, which is intended to be a 14,500 square foot retail building, is not included in the proposed plan. Phase 1, which includes the AC Marriott Hotel and parking structure, is currently under construction.

## **BACKGROUND**

The Master Sign Plan concept originated when Mall of America (MOA) representatives presented the City with a comprehensive sign plan for portions of the MOA site. They were interested in updating the exterior appearance of portions of the MOA as part of Phase IC and using new types of signs to create a more vibrant, exciting, and contemporary character. Proposed MOA signs did not meet City Code standards and significant changes were proposed to the City's Sign Code to provide for greater flexibility and creativity. City Staff and MOA representatives reached consensus on a Master Sign Plan approach and standards that both met the City of Bloomington concerns regarding public safety, quality and public benefit and the property owner's vision for the MOA. The Master Plan process was amended into the City Code by City Council in 2014. In 2015, the Master Plan process was expanded to include the entire South Loop District.

## MASTER SIGN PLAN DESCRIPTION

The Alpha B Master Sign Plan information and accompanying information is provided below in Table 1. Sign location, façade, sign type, Code allowance, sign proposal, and compliance analysis are provided.

Table 1: Signage Description and Compliance Analysis

Location	Façade and/or Type	Code Allowance	Signage Proposed	Compliance
Hotel	South – on-building	1 identification sign, 250 square feet	2 signs – one channel letter, 40 sq. ft., one cabinet, 49 sq. ft.	Flexibility required
Hotel	North – on-building	1 identification sign, 250 square feet	None	Meets Code
Hotel	West – on-building	1 identification sign, 100 sq. ft. max	1 channel letter sign, 55 sq. ft.	Flexibility required
Hotel	East – on-building	1 identification sign, 100 sq. ft. max	1 identification cabinet sign, 100 sq. ft.	Meets Code
Hotel	Roof	Not permitted	4-sided rooftop sign at northwest corner of roof, 100 sq. ft. per side	Flexibility required
Hotel	East and West – porte-cochere	3 face-mounted signs, 20 sq. ft. max each sign	2 face-mounted, 13 sq. ft.	Meets Code
Site	Free-standing – 24 <sup>th</sup> Avenue S.	100 sq. ft., 8 ft. max height, 10 ft. setback	42 sq. ft., 8 ft. height, 20 ft. setback	Meets Code
Site	Free-standing – 26 <sup>th</sup> Avenue S.	100 sq. ft., 8 ft. max height, 10 ft. setback	42 sq. ft., 8 ft. height, 20 ft. setback	Meets Code
Site	Free-standing – E. 82 <sup>nd</sup> Street	100 sq. ft., 8 ft. max height, 10 ft. setback	42 sq. ft., 8 ft. height, 12 ft. setback	Sign size and height meet Code, minor location revision necessary – sign is within clear view triangle
Restaurant/Retail Building	West – on-building	10 percent for channel letter signs	~5 percent	Meets Code
Restaurant/Retail Building	South – on-building	10 percent for channel letter signs	~7.5 percent	Meets Code
Restaurant/Retail Building	East – on-building	7 percent for channel letter signs	~3.5 percent	Meets Code
Restaurant/Retail Building	North – on-building	7 percent for channel letter signs	~5 percent	Meets Code
Parking Structure	East – on-building	200 sq. ft. on elevation along public street, 100 sq. ft. on internal elevations	1 cabinet sign, 168 sq. ft.	Meets Code
Parking Structure	Vehicle entrances	Directional/incidental signs – 12 sq. ft. each	2 incidental signs – 12 sq. ft. each	Meets Code

## **ANALYSIS**

The Master Sign Plan process provides flexibility, at the discretion of the City Council, regarding the number, size, location and type of signs. To ensure signs are coordinated and create a comprehensive and attractive appearance, master sign plans must meet the design principles of balance, character, architectural integration, materials, and safety/maintenance. It is important to note that freestanding signs (with one minor caveat below), and on-building signs for the restaurant/retail building and parking structure are Code-compliant. Flexibility is required only for the proposed hotel signs.

### **Balance/character**

Signs on each elevation complement the architectural features and are strategically placed and sized to allow visibility, a clean, sophisticated appearance and avoid overcrowding. Proposed signs will cover significantly less area than generally permitted by Code. While rooftop signs are not permitted by the City Code, the proposed rooftop sign balances the desire to promote a unique identity without being the hotel's most prominent feature and would be allowed with a parapet wall extension. Further, the mixture of cabinet identification signs near the top of the hotel are balanced by the placement of pedestrian-oriented channel letter hotel identification signs above the first floor. These channel letter signs will complement the channel letter signs that would be installed on the restaurant/retail building proposed as Alpha B Phase 2.

### **Architectural Integration**

The location and construction of the proposed on-building and freestanding signs were developed in conjunction with the Alpha B site and architectural plans. This approach ensured the signs have visibility without taking away from the architecture of the buildings or the quality of the landscaping and sculptural feature within the public plaza proposed in the northwest corner of the site.

### **Materials**

Tenant identification signage will largely consist of steel, aluminum and plastics. These signs may be channel letter or cabinet construction. Details of sign materials and construction will be reviewed during the sign permitting process for compliance with the design principles of the Master Sign Plan, although the developer has indicated the materials will be consistent with signage installed across Lindau Lane at the Towne Place Suites development.

### **Safety/Maintenance**

The various sign types and functions are positioned in locations that should not have a negative impact on public safety, save for the freestanding sign along E. 82<sup>nd</sup> Street, which is located within a clear view triangle. A clear view triangle is formed at the intersection of an access drive and public right-of-way extended 15 feet, in this case to the north and east. Minor adjustments would be necessary to locate the proposed ground sign outside of the clear view triangle.

Signs would be internally illuminated with LEDs. Maximum luminance of daytime and nighttime lighting of all signs is established in Section 21.301.07(c)(5) of City Code. For signs at this location, the maximum luminance is 300 NITS. It is highly recommended all signs be installed with dimmers to control the maximum luminance. If the signs are found to exceed this standard during inspection, reducing brightness to meet City Code is greatly simplified.

## REVIEW PROCESS

### Redevelopment Agreement

Master Sign Plan approval requires an executed Master Sign Plan development agreement. The Master Sign development agreement will document the minimum requirements for quality, duration, operation, and maintenance of the signage in accordance with City Code. A revocation process is outlined within the ordinance if any signs are later found to be maintained in a manner that is detrimental to the public health, safety or welfare.

### Sign Permits

The Master Sign Plan establishes the number, size, location, type and function of all signs along a building façade. Once a master sign plan is adopted, sign permits are required for all exterior signs, unless exempted (i.e. flags, traffic control signs) by City Code. Permit review will cover details of sign design, materials, construction and mounting. Sign permits will be administratively reviewed for conformance with the approved Master Sign Plan. Staff may issue sign permits that have minor differences from the Master Sign Plan provided the signs substantially conform to the intent and design principles of the approved Master Sign Plan.

## FINDINGS

The following findings must be made prior to the approval of a new Master Sign Plan:

### **1) The master sign plan is not in conflict with the Comprehensive Plan.**

- The Master Sign Plan is intended to create a cohesive, dynamic appearance for the Alpha B development. Creating an urban character with signage oriented both for automobiles and for pedestrians is consistent with the intent of the Comprehensive Plan's Land Use Guide Plan designation for High Intensity Mixed Use.

### **2) The master sign plan is not in conflict with any adopted District Plan for the area.**

- The South Loop District Plan calls for creating a distinctive and appealing sense of place. The diversity of signs proposed at Alpha B will add to the South Loop District's unique character.

**3) The master sign plan is not in conflict with the purpose, standards and design principles outlined in Section 21.501.06.**

- (i) The master sign plan must encompass all signs and building facades on a given site. Within the master sign plan, selected facades may be designated to be governed under the applicable sign district standards rather than the master sign plan. In that event, modifications to the selected facades would be subject to the applicable sign district standards but would not require a revision to the master sign plan.
  - The Master Sign Plan includes all signs and building facades that will be constructed as part of Alpha B Phases 1 and 2. Signs for Phase 3 will be governed under the applicable Class VIII sign district standards. The applicant would have the option to apply to revise the Master Sign Plan to incorporate Phase 3 signage.
- (ii) Signs are limited to one or more of the following functions:
  - (A) Tenant identification.
  - (B) On-site advertising.
  - (C) Arts-related.
  - (D) Events.
  - (E) Public service announcement.
  - (F) Other signs under Section 19.115(d).
  - All but two signs within the Master Sign Plan would be used for tenant identification. Incidental signs are permitted on parking structures for traffic control or safety purposes (e.g. clearance height).
- (iii) Balance. The proposed installation of on-site advertising signs must be balanced with the installation of tenant identity signs, arts-related signs, façade enhancements and/or other aesthetic improvements in order to create an attractive, high-quality district character.
  - Signs on each elevation complement the architectural features and are strategically placed and sized to allow visibility, a clean, sophisticated appearance and avoid overcrowding. Proposed signs will cover significantly less area than generally permitted by Code. The mixture of cabinet identification signs near the top of the hotel are balanced by the placement of pedestrian-oriented channel letter hotel identification signs above the first floor. These channel letter signs will complement the channel letter signs that would be installed on the restaurant/retail building proposed as Alpha B Phase 2.
- (iv) Architectural Integration. All sign features, including illumination, support structure, color, lettering, height, and location must be complementary to the architecture and architectural features of the building on which it is located and must appear as a cohesive, planned installation.

- The location and construction of the proposed signs was developed in conjunction with the Phase 1 and 2 architectural and site plan plans. This cohesive approach ensured the signs are complementary to the architecture and architectural features of the entire development.
- (v) Character. The placement, type, operational characteristics and quality of the signs must positively reflect on the district's character and avoid standard billboard dimensions.
- The Master Sign Plan will create a unique, cohesive environment at the Alpha B planned development. Consistent sign design throughout the development will complement the high-quality built environment.
- (vi) Public Safety. Signs must not negatively impact the flow of traffic or cause confusion for motorists and/or pedestrians.
- The various types and functions of signs are positioned in locations that will not have a negative impact on the flow of traffic or cause confusion for motorists or pedestrians. All signs must be located outside of clear view triangles so as not to encumber visibility entering and exiting the development.
- (vii) Materials. Signs, sign frames and sign mounts must be constructed of high quality, durable materials.
- Tenant identification signage will largely consist of steel, aluminum and plastics and will be reviewed through the sign permitted process. Sign illumination will primarily consist of energy efficient LEDs.
- (viii) Visual Impacts. Signs must not negatively impact surrounding land uses.
- The proposed signs should not negatively impact surrounding land uses. Surrounding land uses are retail, hotels, surface parking lot, and MOA.
- 4) The master sign plan will not be injurious to the surrounding neighborhood or otherwise harm the public health, safety and welfare.**
- The master sign plan should not be injurious to the surrounding neighborhood or otherwise harm the public health, safety and welfare. The location, type and function of the signs are positioned in locations that will not have a negative impact on the public or surrounding properties.

**RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends the following motion:

In Case PL2016-86, having been able to make the required findings, I move to recommend City Council approval of a Master Sign Plan for the Alpha B planned development at 8100 and 8150 26<sup>th</sup> Avenue South and E. 82<sup>nd</sup> Street, subject to the conditions and Code requirements attached to the staff report.